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The idea of Garfield
by
Timoleon.



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THE
IDEA OF GARFIELD.

BY
TIMOLEON.

CHICAGO:
JANSEN, McCLURG, & COMPANY.
1882.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE writer of these pages in common, as he believes, with a large number of American citizens, was thrown by the assassination of President Garfield from a state of high anticipation for the future of the country, into a state of doubt and foreboding. The moral sense of the nation had gained in the nomination and election of Garfield a notable victory over the less worthy elements in politics. We had confidence in his uprightness, in his patriotism, in his experience and in his ability to find, in the end, the most advantageous solutions of the vexed questions of administration. We knew him patient in hearing all, diligent in learning all, conscientious in judging all, and successful in maintaining and sustaining his conclusions and convictions. We believed that an era of pure methods and noble motives had dawned with his inauguration. We saw, in expectation, the finances of the nation established on a sound and stable basis, the details of administration purged of jobbery and corruption, the civil service reformed, the political machine reduced to its proper place, and the oligarchical bosses of the machine deprived of their obnoxious power. We looked to see statesmanship in legislation encouraged, and all the influences of government given to harmonize the various material interests of the people, on the basis of the most enduring prosperity. We anticipated monopolies properly controlled, industry encouraged, commerce promoted. We felt that confidence in our own strength, which

moral confidence in our leader alone can give. It seemed as if the nation were prepared to make the grandest and surest strides ever witnessed in history, toward permanent prosperity and the right practices of popular government. All this bright confidence was shattered by the bullet which killed our chief. Since then our expressions of sorrow at the loss of our President have been mingled with the mournings of all the world, but concerning the future of our country we have been dumb. The difficulty of collecting our scattered hopes has been too great, the effort to bring them into coherent form too painful, and the success which attends such efforts too unsatisfactory. We sit like men whose fortunes have disappeared in a fire or a cataclysm, grim, silent and thoughtful. It is natural to hope, and so we hope, even against hope, that the spirit of patriotism which was exemplified in Garfield, as opposed to the oligarchical spirit which is so largely dominant to-day, may prevail with his successor.

It is mainly as a relief to his gloomy thoughts, that the writer has analyzed his reasons for despondency, and finding them taking form as in the following pages, he offers them to his fellow countrymen, to see if they are not confirmed and responded to by kindred thoughts in other minds.

THE IDEA OF GARFIELD.

PROFESSOR FRANCIS LIEBER has shown in his "Political Ethics," that one of three propositions must be true.

1. "Either the State and all the institutions and laws which have emanated from it, exist for the satisfaction of an ambitious and interested or privileged few."

2. "Or politics is the effect of mere chance."

3. "Or the State is an institution for a distinct moral end."

[What Lieber meant by a moral end for a nation's existence, differs from a moral end for an individual life. It can be better expressed as an end of continuous and permanent well-being. Right and wrong in politics are to be determined by this test: is the continuous well-being of the nation thereby promoted? and the well-being of the State consists, as we understand it, in protecting the free action of every individual, so far as not infringing on the right to free action of all individuals.]

Every man who takes part in the affairs of government must be controlled in his decisions and actions by one of the above three theories. It is not necessary to suppose that one man will always consistently act upon one theory. The same man may vacillate from one to another. He may be, at one time, an aristocrat, seeking

to use the government for the gain or selfish advancement of himself, his family, or his clique; at another, a mere gamester, playing his suffrage or influence as a card, in a game which luck controls; and at another a patriot, with lofty aim and disinterested purpose, looking only to the general welfare of his country and his fellow men. It is not often, perhaps, that any one, even in a life-time, assumes all the phases of political motives; but all men change somewhat, and it is not beyond hope that a demagogue may become a patriot, and history affords instances of patriots who have been corrupted by the temptations of power.

In a government by popular majority, it is also possible that now one theory of government and now another, may prevail. No matter what may be the form of constitution, if the majority of the citizens believe that a privileged few should enjoy the advantages of power, the government will be an oligarchy.

(It might be called an aristocracy by the rulers themselves, but unless others are prepared to admit that the rulers are better than the ruled, it should be called merely an oligarchy.)

If the majority are venal and careless, blind chance will rule. But if the greater number are controlled by strong moral convictions, the government will move in accordance therewith.

I think that a careful observer will be able to trace in the course of our government, the influence of these three motives. There have been many periods when oligarchical tendencies dominated local and national affairs. The Southern States, and frequently the National Government, before the war, were governed in the inter-

est of the privileged few. The disposition since the war, to idolize and exalt certain men, without regard to their opinions, is also a manifestation of this motive. The chance theory is more particularly exhibited in the government of large cities, where the corruptible and vicious classes more easily get control. But the moral theory occasionally becomes paramount in seasons of great political activity, and for the time carries all before it in city and state and nation.

The words which most accurately designate those who are under the influence of these three several theories, are, I think, as follows:

1. OLIGARCHS.
2. PROLETAIRES.
3. PATRIOTS.

But one cannot classify his fellow citizens safely under these heads, according to their professions. There are few politicians, or even citizens, who are willing to confess that it is their opinion, that this government should be administered for the benefit of the few: and every villain who sells his vote to the highest bidder is loud in professing his attachment to noble principles. It is only by their doings that men can be judged and arranged in our three classes.

They are surely oligarchs in feeling, whose work is directed to the administration of the affairs of localities, of the states and of the nation for the benefit of a few, no matter what their professions may be; and they are as surely mere devotees of fortune, who sell their influence or their suffrages for money or for offices, no matter what noble principles they advocate.

The politicians who preach the benefit of *caveus* rule,

and the paramount duty of sustaining the party, right or wrong, would undoubtedly scorn the imputation that they are oligarchs; but their practice tends directly to that end. Principles are secondary with them. They justify any breach of political morals on the part of their partisans. With them efficient party service condones crime; bribery is excusable, and even a matter of congratulation, if it succeeds in carrying an election. The greatest rogue is a proper candidate and a suitable office holder if he has a sufficient control over voters.

Professions, however lofty, cannot be weighed against such practices. These are the practices of demagogues whose sole aim is to establish their own power. Their chief object is to establish the rule of the privileged few.

It should never be forgotten that this government is based upon a moral principle,—that is, upon the well-being of all the governed. The founders of the government believed that the true end of government would be attained by the common sense of the majority. It is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, in theory. The mass of the voters still believe this. And until this theory is destroyed, the efforts of the privileged few to turn the government to their own benefit, cannot succeed if properly understood.

The popular movement which nominated and elected Garfield was the assertion of this theory, and there is danger that the moral force of his election will be lost

and forgotten in the sudden transformation of political interests which has followed his death.

Garfield represented the ideal in politics. His nomination and election were due to influences which were partly anti-machine, but more extra-machine.

It is no part of my present plan to trace the growth of his popularity. This would be an interesting narrative, and some day may be fitly told. His nomination for the presidency was no hap-hazard event. It is true it was not prepared for by organized political work, but it was produced by a surer and more dignified development. It was the logical consequence of his character and career. The conviction that he was a proper candidate for the presidency had taken form in the minds of men in all parts of the country some time before the Chicago Convention. It was the recognition of this conviction, which though unorganized was yet decided and powerful, that logically forced his nomination.

The writer of these pages had occasion to observe this popular sentiment some eighteen months before the meeting of this convention, and in the winter of 1879, in a personal letter to General Garfield, mentioned his observations. General Garfield's reply was so characteristic and so noble, so worthy of his great fame, and also so unusual in these days of self-candidacy, that it should be made public, as an example of the right spirit in public men.

Under date of Feb'y 21, 1879, General Garfield wrote:

"I am certainly not indifferent to the good opinion of my fellow citizens. It is gratifying to know that thoughtful men, in any part of the country, look upon me as worthy to occupy the position of chief magistrate

—especially to know that such thoughts are entertained by men not immediately concerned in the management of party machinery. A good many letters of similar import to yours have come to me within the last three months. It would be deemed affectation to pretend indifference to such considerations, but I have seen so many illustrations of the unhappiness and the destruction of usefulness, which have followed the Presidential fever, that I am determined it shall never attack me so as to disturb my peace, and destroy what beneficial service I may be able to render.

“Not more than five men now living can hold the Presidency, before I shall be too old for that place. To assume that out of the six millions of American voters I shall be one of these five, and to lay any plans or make any efforts based upon such an assumption, seems to me too remote and too visionary to be worth incurring the danger which seems to attend all who indulge in that dream. I think it wiser to do whatever duty comes to my hand, holding my soul free to utter itself in accordance to the truth as it shall appear. And if, in pursuance of such a course, the Presidency should happen to come, it would be all the more complimentary than though I had sought it. If on the other hand, as is most probable, it will never come, I shall not have prepared myself for the pangs of disappointment which so many have suffered. It does not seem to me that my self-poise would be upset were I discussed by the public in connection with that office, and yet no man is perfectly sure of himself in advance, and I would rather be master of my own soul than hold any office, however high.”

It will be seen by these, his words, that Garfield was animated by political ambition. Probably as strongly as any man in public life he felt the longing for position and fame. But in his case ambition never overtopped conscience and patriotism. It never mastered his reason. It never induced him to yield his opinion to expediency.

Possessing such qualities and restraining his actions by such rules, the nomination would probably have never come to him, if politicians had alone had the arranging of it. To those who find political success in what are called "practical" methods, Garfield's character and career made him not only an unavailable but an obnoxious candidate. He was in fact the favored candidate of only the amateurs in politics—the inexpert, who attach more importance to framing a good platform than providing a large campaign fund.

Garfield was one of the few Congressmen whose seats were not procured by the use of political patronage. He did not use post offices to reward his personal adherents. He did not besiege the departments to obtain clerkships or consulates for his workers.

His attitude in the business of patronage brokerage, which every Congressman has of late years been compelled to engage in, was as nearly correct as is possible amidst the incorrect practices which prevail. His condemnations of the common evils of our civil service are well known. No one has been clearer or more forcible than he in pointing them out. His practice was consistent with his words.

The writer had from Garfield's own lips a most interesting account of his first reasoning on this subject.

when he found himself called upon, as a Congressman, to make recommendations for offices. This happened when he first took his seat in the House of Representatives—a young man, and when rival delegations of old citizens waited upon him, to present for his decision the rival claims of two candidates for a postmastership in his district. He was struck with the falseness of the position in which they assumed to place him. They treated him as if the office were in his gift, and as if he would give it to the candidate who could be proved his most faithful adherent. This was all wrong. He was abashed and perplexed; but on reflection he was able to hit upon a proper course, and one which he ever afterwards followed. He said to his venerable constituents :

“This is not my office, to bestow on the candidate most friendly to me. In common with all of you, I am interested in having good men in office, and I will co-operate with all of you in securing the appointment of the men who are best fitted to perform the duties of the offices. But I cannot take the responsibility of deciding who are the best men. You must do that. You may arrive at the decision in any way you please, and when you have made your decision, I will, if you wish it, be your errand boy and carry your recommendation to the department. If you cannot reach a decision among yourselves by common consent, you can do so by a popular election; but of this I am confident, that it is not a part of my duties as a Congressman, to make this appointment according to my personal preferences, or to do more than act as your messenger and represent your desires to the appointing power.”

By this happy solution of the patronage question,

General Garfield relieved himself of a vast annoyance throughout his congressional life, and satisfied his constituents. But such conduct was far from commending itself to his brother politicians in Congress. He had few, if any, imitators.

For another reason he could not be the politician's favorite candidate. He had no facility or reputation in ordinary political work.

While he had acquired great shrewdness in the higher arts of politics, he had cultivated none of the practical arts of running the party machine, or of gaining personal popularity. In giving expression to an important question, in shaping the course of a debate, in seeing the correct principle in a controversy, and standing for it in spite of the warnings of friends and the assaults of enemies, he had few, if any, equals in these times. But he knew nothing of the details of electioneering work. He never ran a primary meeting. He had no henchmen in training for future nominations. He controlled no campaign fund. Moreover, he was not even an expert in the art of making political workers his personal friends. He frequently failed to remember the names of those who were mere politicians. While his great power in debate made him the leader of his party in the House of Representatives, he needed to be supplemented by some one more acute than he in learning the personal peculiarities and relative importance of the different members. His great good nature kept him from giving offense to those whom he failed to flatter by an intimate knowledge of their individualities. He was hated by no one, but the astute leaders who took pride in calling each man in their several districts by name, who had an accurate estimate

of the influence which each local politician was able to exert, who thought it the highest statesmanship to secure the best offices for their followers, always seem to entertain a mild contempt for his political ability.

Again, Garfield was personally not very well known in the different parts of the country, three or four years ago. His friends were numerous, but were generally not successful politicians. They were scholars, authors, teachers, men whom he liked for themselves, his old comrades in the war, or in college, or in the Christian Church.

There were some parts of the country where he was asked frequently to make campaign speeches, in New England and in Ohio chiefly. But in places where the machine was well organized, he was seldom invited. He was unknown to New York or Pennsylvania audiences. His voice had scarcely been heard in Illinois or the Northwest.

His acquaintance among leading financiers and business men, was very limited. Notwithstanding his brilliant services as the champion of an honest dollar, and of specie resumption, the bankers and merchants of New York and other large cities, had failed to make his personal acquaintance, or to express in any decided way any recognition of these services. The greatest work of Garfield's career will be hereafter reckoned his strong and intelligent finance speeches, made when the inflation craze was sweeping the country, and when politicians of both parties were eager to adopt an irredeemable currency. During this trying time his voice never uttered a false note, but sounded above the shameful clamor in Congress, keeping constantly at the nation's ear the full pitch of honor and honesty.

Next to Secretary Sherman, and perhaps equally with him, for in their respective essential positions both were superlatively wise and patriotic, Garfield is entitled to the nation's gratitude for our commercial prosperity and unexampled credit. And yet three years ago, after all this service had been rendered, General Garfield might have walked the whole length of Broadway without being recognized or named by the passing crowd. His portrait, now so well known in every corner of the land, would then have been unfamiliar to the great majority of the American people.

I remember hearing of his sitting during a whole evening, about three years since, in the public hall of the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, and seeing but one acquaintance among the politicians and men of business who there congregate.

But it was in the opinions of the quiet and thoughtful patriots that Garfield's strength existed. Obscure, industrious and thoughtful men in all parts of the land had caught the ring of his words in congressional speeches and cherished them in their hearts. It was wonderful that this admiration should have become so powerful, when the knowledge of his personality was so slight. It seems to have been a magnetic patriotism in him which led patriotic instincts from all sides to point towards him—these patriotic instincts which professional politicians cannot comprehend or attract.

For all these considerations, General Garfield would never have received from the mere machine politicians the nomination to the presidency, and when that nomination did come to him, the expressions of rage and disgust from this class on the floor of the convention, were

not suppressed. Yet these same politicians were able to be first in congratulating him, and first in claiming favors at his hands, as they are now equally eager to demand favors of his successor.

Garfield represented that element of the American people who believe in the verity of patriotic, religious and noble sentiments, and who believe that these sentiments are the proper guides of individual and national life. This element is opposed by those who believe only in their own selfish material prosperity—the oligarchs and the proletaires.

The oligarchical element is characterized by opinions and actions which plainly tend to concentrate power in the hands of a comparative few. It must be clannish and intensely partisan. It must place fidelity to party above fidelity to the nation. It must be intolerant, and where the party is greater than it and the proletaires which it controls, it must despise and denounce all within the party who do not acknowledge the wisdom and correctness of its aims. It will probably be less careful to maintain the laws established for the government of all, than to secure to itself the interpretation and execution of the laws. It will probably violate the law if it can thereby secure power. It will favor those methods of appointment to office of which it can most readily secure control, without regard to their influence upon the general welfare. It will approve those practices in offi-

cial positions which will secure to it the most direct and complete mastery of the offices, without regard to the result of these practices upon the public service.

These theories and methods will mark those who aim to have the government administered in the interest of the few; and on the contrary to those who wish a government for the general good, these opinions and actions will be untenable and obnoxious.

Garfield described these evils in our civil service in words which leave no doubt of his disapproval:

“Civil office has become a vast corrupting power to be used in running the machine of party politics. Every man of the 102,000 (office-holders) feels that his only hope of staying is in toadying to those in power, so that the offices are an immense bribe, securing to the party in power an army of retainers who are the most servile of their sort in the world.”

The most conspicuous representatives of the oligarchical element in our politics to-day are the so-called stalwarts of the Republican party. To this element the whole tenor and effect of Garfield's life is directly opposed. With this element he never sympathized, and it was manifest from the time of his inauguration that with this element he could never cordially agree. He never could please them for he never could bring himself to conduct his administration in the spirit which they approved. They were solely bent on securing dominant position for themselves. The welfare of the particular sections, or even of the whole country, was nothing to them. With a shrewdness and persistency characteristic of narrow-minded oligarchs, they demanded the most important offices. They didn't waste time or force in seeking places of mere honor

or of large recompense. They asked only for positions of power, and these they insisted should be given them as their right. The dogged and yet haughty manner in which they pressed their claims finds no parallel in our history. For the time, they caused questions of public policy to be ignored, and the general attention was concentrated upon the endeavor of the stalwarts to bully the President into compliance with their demands. The good-natured but large-minded President strove with a patience and sincerity which, it is safe to say, no great ruler ever before exhibited, to mollify their proud spirits. He was incapable of wholly yielding to them, and their nature and objects could not be satisfied with less. There was no alternative; the oligarchical spirit went down before the moral force of a great mind, and was in a fair way of suffering permanent discomfiture, when it broke out in a new form, and Guiteau's bullet accomplished what Conkling's imperiousness had failed to secure—the establishment of the stalwart oligarchs in power.

It is not my intention to charge the stalwarts with conniving in or rejoicing at the murder of the President. That is a charge which none but a partisan will care to make. But I think that history will hold the spirit of stalwartism responsible for this crime, and this responsibility will be held to be greater if, as now seems probable, stalwartism shows no remorse or repentance, but takes advantage of the nation's misfortune to seize all the agencies of government.

The murder was perpetrated in the name of the stalwarts, by a man who counted upon stalwart gratitude to rescue him from the penalty of his crime. He knew that the spirit of the stalwarts led them to stand by and

protect each other against accusations of crime. He had seen this lately in the case of the star-route thieves. He had heard stalwarts say that the star-route contractors had spent a part of their dishonest gains in contributions to Republican campaign funds, and that it would be base ingratitude in a Republican President to punish them for the stealing. And on the same reasoning, if he by a crime threw the whole coveted power of government into the hands of the stalwarts, if at the darkest hour of their defeat, he by a single overt act gave them victory and success, would it not be the blackest ingratitude in a stalwart administration to let him be led to the gallows?

I am far from charging or insinuating that all those who cherish and act upon oligarchical theories of government, are bad men. While I maintain that their influence upon our politics to-day, is dangerous and corrupting, I am ready to concede to the oligarchs many admirable qualities, to which the country is to a large extent indebted for its material prosperity. The combination of pluck, persistency, and the organizing faculty is very apt to produce in its possessor the oligarchical disposition, provided it is not counterbalanced by a large-minded confidence in mankind. It is better that a man should be an oligarch than a proletaire, and many men who believe in the moral theory of government, are of less use to the world than our shrewd and capable political oligarchs. There is something attractive to the man of successful force of character in running the political machine. The desire of power is natural in such men, and it is easy to confound the power itself with the object for which the power was created—good govern-

ment. The desire to make good laws or to administer the laws well, is overcome by the desire for position and authority. A great many of the men whom history idolizes, made this mistake, and the pleasure which we have in contemplating heroic endeavor, leads us to condone the error.

The temptation to applaud the masterful ways of our own oligarchs, even now is strong. But when we think of the matter calmly, we, the governed, find that we prefer a good government to strong-headed rulers. The most commonplace legislator who is careful of our interests, and the most uninteresting judge who is just in his interpretation of the law, are better for us than the most brilliant partisans. We are more contented and prosperous under the administration of a dull but conscientious executive, than under one whose deep-laid schemes for controlling conventions, and whose shrewd and widely-extended plans for controlling votes, have commanded our admiration.

The late Zach. Chandler is as good an example as we can think of, of our oligarchs in politics. The stories told of his doings have often excited our enthusiasm. His bold, rough, outspoken way, his confidence in himself, his thorough earnestness and devotion to the political work, his unconcealed contempt for all theorists, his practical partisan zeal, which knew no doubt and halted at no obstacle,—all these are intensely interesting. General Garfield said of him: "More than any man I ever knew, Zachariah Chandler went through life with his mind made up."

He would have made an admirable chief of the *Edni* or of the *Helvetii*, and would have given Cæsar a great deal

of trouble. But he never comprehended that a popular government is for the people. His last days were embittered by the neglect of President Hayes to recognize and reward his services as Chairman of the National Republican Committee at the critical election in 1876. Old Zach undoubtedly secured the election of Hayes at that time by his vigorous measures. A patriot would have been satisfied with the result, but the true oligarch clamored for more power.

Republics are rightfully ungrateful in this sense; and the sooner this maxim is made a part of our political creed the better. Political work entitles no man to the reward of office. They are oligarchical governments which give such rewards.

A quotation from one of Garfield's speeches shows his opinion:

"The best and noblest reforms and revolutions in the public sentiment of this country, have been achieved by the people, with patronage, power and the spoils of office against them, and where not one in a hundred of the successful, expected any other reward than the triumph of the principle they advocated. In such conflicts our noblest conquests have been achieved."

Proletaire is not a democratic word, and there should be no proletarian class in a democratic republic. The original application of the word in ancient Rome, was to those who contributed nothing but children to the public wealth, but it came to mean those who were vile and low, improvident and not self-sustaining, disgraceful burdens upon the State and society, without shame or disposition to improve. So in its derived meaning it answers well to designate those anomalous citizens, whose political privileges are purchasable, who look upon the government as the effect of mere chance, and who see nothing more than the power to procure a dinner, or the means of a debauch in the right of suffrage.

From this lowest depth of citizenship the proletarian spirits spreads upwards and controls and characterizes all those who bring their political privileges to market. The employee of government, he who serves the State in an official capacity, is entitled to fair compensation for his labor, as if the service were rendered to a private individual or corporation. But he who renders political service in the interests of his party, degrades his citizenship, by asking or accepting compensation.

This distinction is clearly made in conscience and in reason, but I fear is not clearly drawn in practice. Many a man has accepted recompense for his political work, because others seemed to regard it as proper; but no man, I maintain, who has the spark of a freeman's spirit, has ever done so without humiliation.

The wages of labor are received with a sense of dignity and satisfaction, but the wages of political work, when any part of the service rendered is a yielding of one's opinion or independence, is felt to be the wages of shame.

Such payments are made in secret; they are unreceipted for and unacknowledged.

The citizen does not rise above the proletaire, nor is the bargain less shameful when political influence is bought by appointment to office. In transactions of this kind there is a broad well-beaten road by which the proletaire goes up and becomes an oligarch. The machine in politics is organized to keep this road open. Especially is this the case in large cities. It is easy for a successful proletaire to develop into a demagogue, and a demagogue, when he has firmly established himself, becomes an oligarch.

It may seem that I am using the word patriot in a too restricted sense in designating by it only those who believe, that our government should be directed solely to the best interest of all the governed. But I contend that a patriot must love not only his land, but its form of government. We would hardly call him a patriot, who wished to establish here a monarchical form of government. I think also it will hardly be denied that our form of government being organized to promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty to our fathers and their posterity, is perverted if turned to the advantage of a few. It is then proper, as far as this country and its citizens are concerned, to confine the word patriot to those who believe strictly in the government as originally designed by its founders.

Any citizen who would change the laws or the administration, so that the welfare of the whole people shall no longer be its chief end, is not entitled to this name.

It is even not enough that the general welfare should be kept in view. An oligarchy or a monarchy, it might be claimed by its supporters, best promotes the general welfare. The general welfare must be sought through the general exercise of equal civil rights. The sovereignty of the people must be acknowledged and defended.

A partisan then in excess of zeal, for the mere triumph of his party, may cease to be a patriot, and so may the advocate of sectional interests, or the champion of a monopoly. The man who sells his vote is certainly not a patriot, nor is he who carries to excess personal devotion to a popular hero. He who endeavors to construct a political machinery outside of law, to nullify the political privileges of citizens whom he cannot control, is not a patriot.

He only is entitled to be called an American patriot who is careful to exercise his own political rights without influence of personal reward, and equally careful not to take away or infringe the same rights of others. Every man may vote in this country because our government is based upon the theory that thus the general welfare can be best secured, not because there never has been a party able to curtail or qualify this right.

I am aware that the most probable objection against the use which I make of the word patriot will come from those who have been in the habit of confounding the taking an interest in affairs of government with being patriotic. Men who give attention to public matters are often influenced by sundry unpatriotic motives. Men

may be candidates for office, may make fervid campaign speeches, may fight in the ranks or may lead the armies of the Republic, without having felt one spark of patriotic spirit.

Men may spend their best efforts and their lives in the public service, and yet be solely bent on serving themselves. The test of patriotism is in sacrificing self-interest to the interest of one's country. The educated soldier will do the duty he has been trained to and fight in the cause for which he has enlisted, without regard to the principle involved. But only patriotic feeling can nerve green troops to face the unaccustomed terrors of hostile guns. Garfield, the college professor, leading his men against Humphrey Marshall's intrenchments, and sustaining his soul for the ordeal by muttering

"For how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?"

is a fine example of pure patriotism. The same spirit sustained him afterwards when he alone of all the Western Representatives voted against the Silver bill, and thereby seemed to his advisers to be sacrificing his popularity and his brilliant career.

The professional politician is far from patriotism when he follows his party for the sake of his own success.

Patriotism may be shown in breaking party ties, and throwing away chances of individual advancement, when party triumph would be national misfortune, or party methods are corrupting national life. The true patriots among our people are not necessarily our most promi-

ment men. These are more apt to be influenced by considerations of policy as to their own fortunes, than are independent, thoughtful citizens.

I am aware also that it has been sought to stigmatize those whom I have called patriots, as "sentimentalists," and on the other hand to dignify the oligarchs and proletaires, as "practical" politicians. This use of words is not justified. Although influenced by patriotic sentiments, patriots are not sentimentalists, in any authorized sense of the word. On the contrary, they are the most thoroughly practical of American citizens. They are the sincere and industrious people, and their sentiments are the practical sentiments by which their every-day life is regulated. They learn these sentiments in the common schools, on the farms, and in the shops and factories. The patriots are strongly bound to the welfare of their government, by ties of family, of habitation, and of property. They know that the best way to live satisfactorily is to work manfully and honestly. They are economical and self-supporting. They attend principally to their own affairs.

But when in the intervals of business they go to church, or read books or newspapers, or listen to lectures or political speeches, their minds promptly present certain fundamental principles, by which they judge whatever they see or read or hear. These principles, they may not be able to define clearly, but they make no mistakes in applying them to facts.

It is wonderful what the patriots among the American people can be moved to do, when these silent but never slumbering principles are appealed to. One has but to remember the electrical effect in the North of the firing

on Fort Sumpter. The patriotic sentiment which had remained quiet for years, while politicians played their cards shrewdly and imagined the game all in their own hands, asserted itself in a moment with commanding effect. The mere politicians were swept aside. The self-sacrificing sentiment moved people, and furnished men and money to accomplish their will, which was irresistible. Garfield was one of those patriots at that time, and he led a regiment of patriots like himself.

It may be a healthful mental exercise for certain politicians to recall those times and the difficulty they then found in believing the evidence of their senses, and the extraordinary agility required in getting themselves in the current of the sudden sweeping tide.

Garfield never lost his consciousness of this great patriotic sentiment. He never belittled it by efforts to stifle it in caucuses or to control it by machinery. He revered it and kept himself in accord with it. He never sought to win its favor by fulsome praises, such as are too common in political harangues. But his speeches are full of solemn allusions which show how deeply he appreciated it.

Take the following eloquent passage from his speech in the Chicago Convention, nominating Hon. John Sherman:

“Not here in this brilliant circle, where fifteen thousand men and women are assembled is the destiny of the Republic to be decreed; not here where I see seven hundred and fifty-six delegates waiting to cast their votes into the urn and determine the choice of their party, but by four millions of Republican firesides where thoughtful fathers with wives and children about them, with

calm thoughts inspired by love of home and love of country, with the history of the past, the hopes of the future, and the knowledge of the great men who have adorned and blessed our nation in days gone by—there God prepares the verdict that shall determine the wisdom of our work to-night. Not in Chicago, in the heat of June, but in the sober quiet which comes between now and November, in the silence of deliberate judgment will this great question be settled.”

It would be easy to fill a volume with extracts from his speeches giving varying forms of this idea.

At the time of his election to the Presidency his mind seemed to be more occupied with the grandeur of the thought that millions of ballots were being cast to indicate the will of the people than with considerations of his personal interest in the result.

As a kindred idea, and one which also distinguishes patriotism from oligarchism, Garfield frequently spoke of the necessity of changes in political offices for the preservation of public well-being. His favorite figure for this was the sea, as in the following:

“There is deep down in the hearts of the American people a strong and abiding love of our country and its liberties, which no surface storm of passion can ever shake. That kind of instability which arises from a free movement and interchange of position among the members of society, which brings one drop up to glisten for a time in the crest of the highest wave and then to give place to another, while it goes down again to mingle with the millions below. On such instability the eternal fixedness of the universe is based. * * * * *

So the hope of our national perpetuity rests upon that

perfect individual freedom, which shall forever keep up the circuit of perpetual change."

Or this:

"There is no horizontal stratification of society in this country that holds one class down below forever and lets another come to the surface to stay there forever. Our stratification is like the ocean where every individual drop is free to move, and where from the sternest depths of the mighty deep any drop may come up to glitter on the highest wave that rolls."

It is the tendency of oligarchism to deny this theory. The oligarchs endeavor to make themselves permanent in the higher political positions, and in order to do this they make the tenure of office insecure in the non-political offices, those in which mere expert or clerical labor is required. They would make the holding of the non-political positions dependent upon personal allegiance to those in political power, and thus create for themselves an army of salaried retainers, paid out of the public funds. Exactly the reverse of this was intended by the founders of the Government. It was intended that non-political positions should be held during good-behavior and efficiency without regard to political changes. But it was provided that the holding of political offices should be frequently referred to the decision of the people at elections, and Washington, the first citizen of the republic, expressed in action the truth which his late successor Garfield expressed in the figures I have quoted, that only in well-ordered instability among political factors, can permanent well-being to the state be secured. Washington refused to be a candidate for a third term. His patriotic wisdom in this

single act can never be too highly revered and commended. He probably saved the patriots of the present day from the rule of an oligarchy, against which they might have struggled in vain.

Still another distinction which may be drawn between patriots and oligarchs, is in the different attitudes they assume concerning candidacy for political office.

The true oligarch claims nomination for office as his personal right, and treats all other possible candidates as his personal enemies. The patriot, on the other hand, feels an instinctive diffidence in seeking a nomination, and recognizes no ground for enmity against others, whom some of his fellow citizens seem to prefer.

It is impossible to exhaust the fund of these thoughts, which come to those who mourn the loss of Garfield to his country. The vision of what he was qualified to be fades before the reality that he is no more. And the question, where shall we look for another leader like him, remains unanswered.

His great and noble qualities stand out in unexampled magnificence; and it should be the effort of all of us, to keep them before our public men, as the standard of what we require. They should also be clearly presented to the minds of the rising generation, as the example of what American citizenship may be made.

History has never known so sad a cutting off. It is as if Washington had fallen at White Plains, or Lincoln

had been assassinated before issuing the proclamation of emancipation.

Garfield's training and his capacities missed their greatest fulfillment. His qualifications remain for the most part uncrystalized in deeds. The noble mark which he might have set upon our national history, can never be fully realized, and can be evidenced only by the regrets of his countrymen.

It is chiefly as the possessor of great qualities that we must remember and honor Garfield. The nation and the world knew him fairly but a few months. In this brief period they had opportunity to observe his grand character. They learned something of his conscientious patriotism, something of his statesman-like reasoning, something of his kind but firm temper and manly fortitude; and when the light of publicity was flashed upon his simple domestic life, the whole world of faithful husbands and loving wives, of tender parents and dutiful children, were touched, as never before, with reverence and affection.

So it is to a great extent as an idea, not in realized works, that Garfield remains with us. It is this idea of a high-minded patriotic life which we should sacredly cherish. We should defend it from all envious detractions and belittling suggestions. And we, the patriotic people of these United States, by contemplating and following this idea, will be prepared to overcome the proletarian influence in politics, and to unmask and defeat the designs of political oligarchs.

There is a keen instinct which calls every patriotic American citizen to his duty, in the hour of supreme danger. This instinct works mysteriously. It is foolish-

ness and a stumbling block to many highly intelligent men who have not felt it. But it is the leaven of self-government which permeates and preserves the nation. It has resisted tyranny from without and treachery from within. It seems to be the last and most intelligent development of the Anglo-Saxon spirit. It is so tolerant of differing opinions, that it hardly raises a voice to express dissent. It will endure menaces, and even lesser wrongs almost without remonstrance. It seems forgiving of injuries, forgetful of insults, asleep, even dead. But let a deadly blow be aimed at a principle which it cherishes as vital, and it is awake in an instant. At such times, it speaks with a million tongues but one voice; it strikes with a hundred thousand arms but one blow.

Many times in our history has it seemed as if this freeman's instinct in the people were grown powerless, corrupted by self-interest, or overborne by sectional jealousy and distrust. But never yet has it failed to manifest itself at the proper time. Still, anxious minds often ask if it is not too much relied on, if it is not possible that it may fail in some great crisis and leave the nation to fall into anarchy or despotism. Foreign politicians are looking for and prophesying such a fate for us. Many capitalists interested in our material prosperity are speculating on such a contingency. There are even selfish organizations whose efforts are bent to bring about such a result.

The influences which pull our government toward ruin are not unknown. They are not phantoms of sentimental minds, but are embodiments of powerful human selfishness. On the one hand are the idle, the dissolute and

the incompetent, perverting the privileges of freedom, and as the pretended champions of labor and humanity, pressing on to confiscate, possess and enjoy the fruits of the labor of the industrious, the frugal and the orderly. And on the other hand are the great schemers, who would organize the forms of production and commerce for their own exclusive advantage, and make all property and all effort pay perpetual tribute to their treasuries. How shall we escape the wretched chaos of the socialists without delivering ourselves into the hands of the monopolists; and how shall we free ourselves from the slavery of the monopolists without falling into the slough of communism? Is our Anglo-Saxon spirit of freedom still capable of

“Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes”?

If disaster comes to us it must come over the ruins of the noble characters in our history. It must come trampling on the memories of Washington and Lincoln and Garfield. Before the patriotic instinct can be weakened and overcome, our admiration for these and other great men must be destroyed. Their qualities must be soiled by detraction and dwarfed by innuendoes. We must be made ashamed of their achievements, and their grand sentiments must find no echo in our hearts. In this direction may we expect the attack upon patriotic instinct to be made, and in guarding the reputation of Garfield, our latest national hero, lies a part of our patriotic duty.

Wherever and whenever in our country freemen shall rally in time of danger, whether the public enemy is to be met at the polls in the form of an oligarchal and pro-

letarian party, or on a more sanguinary battle-field in less insidious guise, the name of Garfield will be a watch-word to raise patriotic ardor, and the idea of Garfield, the well-grounded type of the noblest American citizen, will inspire to victory. With this sign, while the republic lasts, patriots shall conquer.





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